Speaker Benedik called the meeting to order at 3:19 P.M.

Speaker Comments:
Speaker Benedik started with announcing the passing of one of our very distinguished, recently retired faculty members, Howard Kaplan from Liberal Arts. He was Howard was the Mary Thomas Marshall Professor of Liberal Arts, a Regents Professor and a Distinguished Professor of Sociology and he chaired the Distinguished Professors Executive Committee for a number of years and was an outspoken voice for the faculty. Speaker Benedik extended our condolences to Diane, herself a very active member of the faculty, a long time member of the Faculty Senate and a former speaker.

Benedik noted that the 4 amendments to the Faculty Senate Constitution were approved by the faculty with the required 2/3s majority. The most salient of these was the ending of term limits and modifications to the definition of faculty eligible to vote and serve for the Senate. He noted this also impacts faculty eligible to vote for Department Heads and Deans and these changes take place immediately. He told the colleges who have an empty seat in the Senate, this does mean that Senators who were forced to step down due to term limits are eligible to be reappointed.

The Speaker noted that Provost Watson will shortly be reviewing the outcomes of the first set of campus wide dialogues in the Commitment to Excellence series. He said there was an excellent showing of Faculty for the on Faculty responsibilities, such that we ran out of food and he thanked those who came. He found it informative to hear thoughts from our faculty on this, but it was especially interesting to hear from the students. Soon the next series of dialogues on our Shared Accountabilities will take place in the latter part of October and through November.

Speaker Benedik then introduced Provost Karan Watson to discuss the impacts of budget cuts and increased mandates and also the current dialogue series. He noted that Provost Watson will shortly be reviewing the outcomes of the first set of campus wide dialogues in the Commitment to Excellence series. He said there was an excellent showing of Faculty for the on Faculty responsibilities, such that we ran out of food and he thanked those who came. He found it informative to hear thoughts from our faculty on this, but it was especially interesting to hear from the students. Soon the next series of dialogues on our Shared Accountabilities will take place in the latter part of October and through November.

Speaker Benedik stated after last month’s Faculty Senate meeting he heard from a number of senators (and some non-senators as well) regarding the discussion on curricular changes. Some of these raised the question of what is appropriate for discussion in the Senate, why should we discuss something that has been approved by committee, and a few asked him what is the Senates role.

Benedik briefly discussed that the Faculty Senate is the last faculty stop for any curricular or other changes and it is our duty to look at these carefully and decide on a course of action. While we rely on the college and university level committees to look at these, we have do have the final say, therefore if any senator has a question, it is appropriate to raise it. The University Curriculum Committee and the Graduate Curriculum Committee, as well as many others, report to the Senate. We decide what to do with those reports. If our role is just as a rubber stamp, then we are wasting our time. Admittedly most go through without debate, but it is those that don’t which are the important ones.

The Speaker noted how last months debate may not have been comfortable to everyone, there is nothing wrong with raising a question about a curriculum change, about asking questions about rigor or appropriateness, or asking why something is changing. We are supposed to ask those. Occasionally, but rarely, it may come down to two departments or two colleges disagreeing. Then it is the job of this body to decide. Let us not shirk our responsibility to enter into discussions that might be uncomfortable, and I know that we can do that collegially and professionally. But don’t shy away from asking.

Guest Speaker:
Speaker Benedik then introduced Provost Karan Watson to discuss the impacts of budget cuts and increased mandates and also the current dialogue sessions. She said the budget cuts have underscored questions about accountability and how we set priorities. Compared to a year ago, TAMU has 580 fewer faculty and staff; this number includes 253 faculty, of which 141 were tenured or tenure-track (TTF). There are 65 TTF searches currently underway, which will partially replace the 105 faculty who terminated under the Voluntary Separation Program (VSP); some colleges used the salary savings from VSP to preserve non-TTF and staff positions. There was a net loss of 112 non-TTF, equalling 88 full-time equivalent positions.

Fall enrollment is up 925 students, which was unplanned. The University of Texas only admitted the top 8% of Texas high-school graduates automatically, so our yield from the top 10% was greater. State and federal financial aid (mostly need-based) has been reduced. The number of sections is down 1.5% overall, and the average course size up 3.5%. In previous years courses filled 70% of their seats on average. There has been a relatively small impact on students, though field trips, study abroad, etc., have been cut; reallocation may restore these to some extent.

The current series of dialogues has not brought up anything too surprising from students. Staff were asked for their response regarding Vision 2020; a common complaint was the perception that faculty and administrators show a lack of respect toward staff and do not appear to value their contributions. Graduate students aspire to be outstanding scholars and to lead their particular fields. Faculty emphasized the importance of representing to the students the value of integrating teaching and research, and so on; a summary of faculty ideas will be prepared. Students responded that they often did not know
what research their instructors did. Both faculty and students urged the need to show that you care. Student leaders emphasized that learning can’t be at just a minimum level; TAMU will be judged by the performance of its alumni over the several decades of their careers.

The next dialogue will present a lot of data already turned in to the state, including average teaching load, which is about 10 hours of courses for credit (including 491’s, etc.). The final dialogues will focus on how we want to structure accountability. The point of all the dialogues is not to reach a final decision but to identify and prioritize the salient issues.

Steven Miller (Liberal Arts) said the relationship between accountability and Vision 2020 has reached a conflict since funding cuts for terminal M.S. and M.A. student support will impact TAMU’s training of high school teachers and have consequences for years to come; he asked for a reexamination. Karan Watson replied that this was not about admission limits but a redirection toward Ph.D. students, and it will be reviewed in the spring.

Chris Mathewson (Geosciences) asked what was the impact of rehiring terminated VSP faculty; Karan Watson replied that VSP cost 16 million dollars and the colleges’ budgets increased 13 million dollars.

Speaker Benedik asked about the outlook for the state budget. Karan Watson replied that state sales tax revenues are back up and holding steady, but this fall will show the impact of state layoffs, teacher layoffs, etc. She expects any increases to go first to PK-12 and health and human services instead of to higher education.

Clint Magill (Agriculture and Life Sciences) noted that the biggest losses were in enrichment programs and asked how reallocations will be determined. Karan Watson said that academics will receive 10.2 million dollars from the reallocation fund and another two million dollars from the Academic Master Plan’s teaching/learning/engagement roadmap. 7.2 million dollars of that 12.2 million will be allocated by formula to colleges for “high-impact” student learning experiences, some of the remainder will be awarded competitively, and the balance will go to support-type programs.

Kathryn McKenzie (Education and Human Development) said that despite Vision 2020’s imperative 6 regarding diversity and globalization of the A&M community, her college has lost five black scholars and the dean’s policy is not to make counteroffers. Karan Watson replied that having people recruited away is an indication that the national economy is recovering; she also said that it is not a university-wide policy not to make counteroffers.

Kevin Hines (Entomology) asked about Chancellor Sharp’s talk about increasing revenues. Karan Watson said all AAU schools are looking at this, e.g., to increase the number of out-of-state students not given tuition waivers; also, the College of Education and Human Development has an “accelerate to graduate” initiative including online graduate and undergraduate courses and minimesters. The state is looking at graduation rates and so on.

Jorge Alvarado (Engineering) asked about the impact of the new Office of Shared Research Services on TEES. Karan Watson replied that there have been lots of discussions but it was imposed on TAMU by the TAMU System so we are trying to make it work for the system. Among the problems is that the proposed cost model increases costs for agriculture and engineering, so discussions will continue.

The September 12 Faculty Senate meeting minutes were approved. Motion Passed FS.29.34

Consent Agenda The consent agenda was approved as submitted.

GRADUATE COUNCIL

New Courses - September 1, 2011
CSCE 635 AI Robotics
ECEN 711 Sustainable Energy and Vehicle Engineering
ECEN 720 High-Speed Links Circuits and Systems
NUEN 662 Nuclear Materials under Extreme Conditions
NUEN 663 Fundamentals of Ion Solid Interactions
PETE 684 Professional Internship

Course Changes - September 1, 2011
CHEN 681 Seminar
CHEN 684 Professional Internship
CHEN 685 Directed Studies
CHEN 691 Research
CVEN 614 Stabilization of Soil-Aggregate Systems
ECEN 612 Computer Aided Sign of Electromechanical Motion Devices

Course Withdrawals - September 1, 2011
CSCE 607 Software Models and Metrics
CSCE 609 AI Approaches to Software Engineering
CSCE 615 Distributed Component Architecture
CSCE 618 Resilient Computer Systems
CSCE 623 Parallel Geometric Computing
CSCE 632 Expert Systems
CSCE 651 Simulation I
Special Consideration - September 1, 2011
Proposed 2012-2013 Academic Calendar

Special Consideration - September 1, 2011
Proposed, Abbreviated Academic Calendar 2013-2014

UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

New Course - September 9, 2011
BMEN 425 Biophotonics
CLAS 220 History of Christianity: Origins to the Reformation
CLAS 250 Greek and Roman Civilization
CLAS 418 European Intellectual History from Ancient Greece to the Early Middle Ages
UGST 492 Cooperative Education in Public Policy
VLCS 422 Equine Disease and Epidemiology

Change in Courses - September 9, 2011
CLAS 491 Research
EURO 491 Research
FREN 491 Research
GERM 491 Research
RUSS 491 Research

Change in Curriculum - September 9, 2011
Motion Passed FS.29.40
College of Liberal Arts
Department of European and Classical Languages and Cultures
B.A. in Classics
Greek and Latin Language Concentrations

W-COURSES

W certification:
ENGL 481 Senior Seminar: Chivalric Literature
ENGL 481/AFST 489 Senior Seminar: Caribbean Literature
ENGL 481/AFST 489 Senior Seminar: Narratives of Passing in U.S. Literature
SOCI 445 Sociology of Law

W re-certification:
ATMO 463 Air Pollution Meteorology
ENGL 414 Milton
ENGL 431 Chaucer
HIST 367 Colonization of North America
MGMT 373 Managing Human Resources
RPTS 304 Administration of Recreation Resource Agencies
VIST 375 Foundations of Visualization
WFSC 410 Principles of Fisheries Management

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Motion Passed FS.29.42
Proposed Revisions to Student Rules 12, 21, 46, 59

Motion Passed FS.29.43
Proposed Revisions to Student Rules 10.1, 14.2, 14.16.1, 17.3

Motion Passed FS.29.44
**Committee Reports**

**UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE**

Clint Magill (Agriculture and Life Sciences) moved that agenda items K through Q, tabled at the October 10, 2011, meeting, be removed from the table; the motion passed.

*Agenda items K through Q were individually moved, seconded, discussed, and passed.*

**Change in Curriculum - Revised as requested by Faculty Senate**

*Motion Passed FS.29.45*

**College of Agriculture and Life Sciences**

B.S. in Renewable Natural Resources

**Change in Curriculum - Revised as requested by Faculty Senate**

*Motion Passed FS.29.46*

**College of Agriculture and Life Sciences**

Department of Ecosystem Science and Management
B.S. in Ecological Restoration

**Change in Curriculum - Revised as requested by Faculty Senate**

*Motion Passed FS.29.47*

**College of Agriculture and Life Sciences**

Department of Ecosystem Science and Management
B.S. in Forestry

**Change in Curriculum - Revised as requested by Faculty Senate**

*Motion Passed FS.29.48*

**College of Agriculture and Life Sciences**

Department of Ecosystem Science and Management
B.S. in Rangeland Ecology and Management
Ranch Management Option
Rangeland Resources Option

**Change in Curriculum - Revised as requested by Faculty Senate**

*Motion Passed FS.29.49*

**College of Agriculture and Life Sciences**

Department of Ecosystem Science and Management
B.S. in Spatial Sciences

**Administrative Change - Revised as requested by Faculty Senate**

*Motion Passed FS.29.50*

**College of Agriculture and Life Sciences**

Department of Soil and Crop Sciences
B.S. in Agronomy
Turfgrass Management Option
Request to change option to a stand alone B.S. in Turfgrass Science degree

**Special Consideration - Revised as requested by Faculty Senate**

*Motion Passed FS.29.51*

**College of Agriculture and Life Sciences**

Department of Soil and Crop Sciences
B.S. in Plant and Environmental Soil Science
Plant Science Career Emphasis
Environmental Soil Science Emphasis
Request to replace existing emphasis with two new emphases:
Crops Emphasis and Soil and Water Emphasis

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

"RESOLVED, that the attached proposed revisions to University Rules 12.99.99M5 and 12.99.99M6, previously discussed at the September 12, 2011, Faculty Senate meeting, are hereby approved."

*Motion Passed FS.29.52*

Secretary Daugherity moved approval of agenda item R; the motion was seconded and thoroughly discussed. Senators debated the motivation and wisdom of allowing more than two four-year terms for deans and department heads with the support of at least two-thirds of the affected faculty. Arguments in favor included giving faculty more voice and more options. Arguments in opposition included the need for "fresh eyes and new blood" to avoid isolation, entrenchment, and stagnation.

Kim Hill (Political Science) called the question, and the motion passed by a vote of 43 to 8.
SEBAC Report - Walter Daugherity

Secretary Daugherity reported on the September 22, 2011, System Employee Benefits Advisory Committee (SEBAC) at the System offices (the morning after a rather eventful day). The FirstCare medical plan has been closed, A&M Care enrollment is up 3%, and Scott & White Health Plan enrollment is down 4%. 76 employees dropped medical coverage and have no other medical coverage. Fewer people signed up for optional coverages, presumably due to increased premiums.

The final report on ineligible dependents dropped after the audit of a random half of employees is due this month; then the second half of employees will receive dependent audit forms.

The TAMU System is looking into a Blue Cross-Blue Shield tiered network including local providers such as the new Scott & White hospital. Medco is being bought out by ExpressScripts. John Hancock has applied to increase long-term care premiums by 45%; the Texas Department of Insurance website [http://www.tdi.texas.gov/pubs/consumer/cb032.html] lists personal policies which might be cheaper.

A number of cost increases due to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA, commonly referred to as “Obamacare”) have already taken effect: most over-the-counter items have been dropped from flexible spending accounts (PayFlex), dependent children can now be covered to age 26, more procedures are covered, and adverse benefit determination notices must be available in non-English languages such as Navajo or Vietnamese. More cost increases are expected as additional PPACA provisions take effect through 2018, including listing health premiums on W-2 forms (January, 2012), a new mandatory federal four-page form (March, 2012), and a reduction in flexible spending accounts to $2,500 (January, 2013).

Changes are also possible in Medicare, which will affect our retiree health insurance plan. President Obama first proposed raising the Medicare eligibility age, then withdrew that proposal and has now proposed that new Medicare beneficiaries pay higher deductibles on coverage of doctors’ services and other outpatient care, and pay 30 percent higher Medicare premiums if they buy generous private insurance to help fill gaps in Medicare. (Note: A&M’s health insurance is secondary to Medicare for our over-65 retirees, unless they continue working for the TAMU System.)

The state has historically contributed 95% of the Employees’ Retirement System (ERS) amount to TAMU employees, but that was reduced to 92.5% by the previous legislature and is going down to 83%, so the TAMU System may have to reduce benefits compared to ERS unless system components contribute more.

New Business

Committee of the Whole

There being no further business to come before the senate, Speaker Benedik turned the chair over to Speaker-Elect Stallone to convene the Committee of the Whole. Patrick Burkhart (Liberal Arts) reported that over seventy faculty have been served with public information requests for their emails on women’s and gender studies and GLBT; public information requests to TAMU are handled by the division of finance. Numerous senators discussed their experiences with public information requests and their understanding of the law and university policies regarding what is or is not subject to disclosure via a public information request, and fees that may be charged or waived; it was recommended that the Executive Committee consult the TAMU System general counsel, the division of finance, and computer and information services for clarification.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 5:02 P.M.